

Social Cohesion through Sport

Creating a sense of belonging and building bridges across communities – regardless of age, gender, ability or belief.

Strengthening social relations

Human rights-oriented values

Equal opportunities

Social Cohesion in the Project Context

- The Sport for Development (S4D) approach is a recognised tool to reach vulnerable groups (children and youth; marginalised people, girls and young women) and has been used by German Development Cooperation in 37 countries, many of which are facing major socio-economic crises due to violent conflicts, natural disasters, and human rights abuses displacing millions of people.
- In East Africa and the Horn of Africa, disasters (droughts, flooding) and violent conflicts force millions of people to seek refuge in neighbouring countries like Kenya and Ethiopia.
- The multi-ethnic, post-conflict societies of the Western Balkans require support in improving neighbouring relations.
- Displacement due to war and conflict in Colombia and the region resulted in many refugees and wide-spread violence.
- In Jordan and Iraq more than 900,000 Syrian refugees were registered and more than three million people in Iraq are internally displaced.

The Sport for Development Approach

- S4D uses sport, physical education and physical activity intentionally to pursue non-sporting development outcomes following a rights-based approach while embracing diversity.
- The United Nations recognise sport as an enabler of sustainable development and ‘as a means to promote education, health, development and peace’.
- Sport is a social experience and when taught in an educational and context-sensitive manner, sport and physical activity teach life skills and values such as tolerance, respect, non-discrimination and gender equality, improve ways to resolve conflicts peacefully and foster social relations and solidarity.
- Sport creates a safe and neutral space in which individuals – regardless of age, gender, ability or belief – from different backgrounds can come together in a harm-free environment which promotes fun and enjoyment. Through this, participants can interact with each other, learn from one another and build mutual trust.

Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project area	Kenya, Ethiopia, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Western Balkans
Most relevant partners	National, regional and local governments; local and international civil-society actors; sport federations, associations and clubs; academia; and private companies
Target group	Children and youth, communities, organisations and governments
Overall term	Sector Programme 2012-2022 Regional Programme Africa 2014-2022 Regional Programme Jordan/Iraq 2014-2024
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Approach to Strengthening Social Cohesion

- In the various target countries S4D focuses on different areas of social cohesion applying a context-sensitive and needs-based approach.
- S4D uses participant-oriented, learner-centred, value-based learning methods.
- Strengthening of social networks (on individual and collective level) through participatory planning and implementation of inclusive sport activities.
- Through sport, social relationships and friendships can be developed, contributing to a greater sense of shared identity and feeling of belonging, especially in displacement contexts. It fosters personal and social competences, interaction and integration, and counteracts feelings of isolation and lays the foundation for peaceful coexistence.

Athletics in Kakuma, Kenya



- Sport boosts self-confidence, improves the mental and psychosocial well-being, helps to reduce stress and supports recovery from traumatic experiences and anxiety.
- A special focus on children and youth, who act as communicators and mediators can achieve a long-lasting impact on societies.

Achievements and Impacts

- S4D contributes to tolerance, anti-discrimination and conflict resolution by teaching children and youth to apply these concepts on and off the field.
- S4D improves social relations by offering different forms of communication and interaction: “Football is important as it brings interaction and unity amongst communities living in the camp and with the host community, fostering cohesion.” (Carlos Gatlliah, S4D Coach and youth leader, South-Sudanese Refugee, Kakuma, Kenya).
- The S4D methodology is integrated in partner organisations and GIZ programmes as an effective tool to foster social cohesion.
- S4D coaches and participants are role models in society and become agents for change: “I quickly recognised the enormous potential of the project concept. The idea of specifically combining professional football training with personal development is new to Jordan. And it’s much more fun working with children in this way and watching them develop, regardless of their nationality, age or gender. As coach, I’m also learning a lot about my function as a role model for the kids – both on and off the pitch.” (S4D Coach and national player Maryana Haddad, Jordan).

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

- Apply context-sensitive planning and implementation, following the do-no harm approach and safeguarding in sports principles.
- Apply a rights-based approach ensuring participation of all in a harm-free and enjoyable environment.
- Include participants in planning and implementation phases involving affected communities alike (refugees, internally displaced persons, voluntary returnees and host communities).

Girls playing Football in Jordan



- Involve governments, civil society, private sector and affected communities for a multi-agency approach.
- Establish close links with academia to develop approaches based on existing research and experiences.
- Develop joint standards for programming, monitoring and evaluation in order to make results comparable.

How we measure

- The overall aim is to measure the contribution of S4D to different SDGs.
- The S4D Impact Indicator Frameworks allow for a systematic and specific approach to measure the contribution of S4D to the SDGs. They are based on the competences that children and youth gain in different SDG-related areas.
- Quantitative data on participants and multipliers is collected and monitored.
- Pre- and post-questionnaires, coach mentoring and follow-ups are used in coach education to measure knowledge, competencies, applicability and satisfaction.
- Impact studies measure the effect S4D has on the target group, as implemented in Colombia and the Western Balkans.

Available Documents

- [Sport for Development Resource Toolkit](#)
- [Sport for Development – YouTube](#)
- [Sport for Development – Instagram](#)

Football in Kakuma, Kenya



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